







A

SERMON

ON THE

CHARACTER, THE COMMISSION, AND THE MESSAGE

OF THE

GOSPEL MINISTRY:

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF A

General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church,

In St. Paul's Church, in the City of Baltimore,
on the 18th Day of May, A. D. 1808.

BY THE RIGHT RÉVEREND

WILLIAM WHITE, D. D.

BISHOP OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN
THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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*In General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States
of America, at Baltimore.*

House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, Wednesday, May 18, 1803, A. M.

" On motion, Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of the Convention be returned to the Right Rev. Bishop White for his sermon preached before the Convention this morning, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

" The House of Bishops concurred in this resolution, and informed this House that the Right Rev. Bishop White would furnish a copy of his sermon for the purpose aforesaid."

Extract from the Journals.

JOHN HENRY HOBART, *Secretary*
of the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies

A S E R M O N.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 20.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

IT may seem inconsistent, that the Apostle appears to address the members of the Church of Corinth, as if, at the time of his writing this epistle, they stood in need of the reconciliation spoken of. Certainly, the sentiment does not seem agreeable to the usual manner of St. Paul, in his epistles to the churches: for, however he may have occasion to set things in order among them, in some respects; and even to reprove them in others; yet he acknowledges them, under the name of "Saints," or of the "elect of God," or of "the sanctified in Christ Jesus;" or in some such description of the Christian character. The last of these expressions is applied by him to the Corinthians, in his former epistle. In the epistle now before us, he considers them as "partakers with him in the sufferings and in the consolations" of the Christian calling; and, in a strong figure, he tells them, "ye are the Epistle of Christ, written, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God." Why then, it may be said, does he address them in the text as if they were still "dead in trespasses and sins;" and accordingly had still need of "the ministry of reconciliation?"

This difficulty is done away, by the fidelity with which the translators of the Bible have noted in italic characters such words as they did not find in the original; but which they thought might be usefully added for amplification. The word "you," twice used in the text, is printed in italics:

and if, by a ~~most~~ strict translation, we omit it, the effect of the alteration will be a description to the Corinthians indeed, of the gospel ministry; but the speaking of its message, as addressed to unbelieving and to apostate persons. For then the reading will be—"As though God did beseech by us, and we pray in Christ's stead"—meaning, we beseech and pray those who are strangers to the covenant of promise, "be ye reconciled to God."

I have introduced what I think a just criticism, merely because it makes the text in form, as it is, according to either translation, in matter, agreeable to the general tenor of holy writ. And I shall consider the words as setting before us the following particulars concerning *Gospel Ministers*:

I. Their characters.

II. Their commission.

III. Their message.

1. We have here the *character* of Gospel Ministers; which is, indeed, involved in the second head proposed: and my only reason for making it a separate branch of this discourse, is to say a few words to vindicate from reproach the title thus given to the Ministers of Christ. For it has been a favourite topic of infidelity, to represent this title as a cover of spiritual pride; which, taken in connection with the stain of that black passion sometimes defiling the clerical profession, may make it the dictate of mistaken modesty in the minister of Christ, to decline a dignity with which he is vested by the word of God.

Let it then be, in the first place, remarked, that arrogance, where it exists, has its origin in causes very distinct from mere names; and that where those causes lurk, there are no names which may not be a cover of their baseness. What name more humble than that of servant of servants? And yet it has been borne by those who have trampled on the sovereignties of kings and states, and usurped a dominion over the whole Christian Church.

But, independently on this, the whole question turns on a fallacy, by too rigid an application of a word, which being taken from dealings among men, and here connected with dealings of God to men, should be interpreted on the same principle, as an allusion or metaphor ; in regard to which, it is not necessary that the comparison should hold in many points ; but it is sufficient, that this ground of comparison be conspicuous in the single point which the allusion is intended to illustrate.

Now, the property of the Christian ministry especially in view, in its being compared to an embassy, is simply its being founded on the appointment of another, with the trust, the dependence, and the responsibility involved in that idea ; all which tend, not to arrogance, but to self abasement.

The sentiment that it is under the appointment of another has this operation, by pointing out to the minister, that not his own glory, but his Master's, should be the end of his ministry : a circumstance always to be kept in view, while there shall be those infirmities of human nature, which lead so many who consider the peace of the church of less importance, than the pre-eminence with their respective parties ; and with the most plausible and imposing pretensions, to " speak perverse things, that they may draw away disciples after them."

As the recollection of such a supereminent authority has the effect ascribed to it, so also has that of the trust thence derived : a trust, obliging to the delivery of a will revealed ; than which nothing more effectually imposes restraint on the human imagination ; and checks natural inclination to " establish for doctrines the commandments and the suggestions of men."

Of the same important use, is the dependence which the doctrine suggests ; a dependence on a " strength without which we can do nothing ; and which is to be made perfect in our weakness."

'The same too may be said of our responsibility to God, concerning what is fitly called a stewardship, which we must give an account of; and talents, of which we must render the returns.

All these things are included in the comparison of the Christian ministry to an embassy; and surely they must all be seen as motives of "fear and trembling," and not as inducements to "think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think."

If, after all, the objection should be directed not at the name, but at the thing referred to by the allusion; not at the apprehension of assumed importance to the persons, but at the deriving of the authority from a divine source; I answer, that this is to be defended on other grounds; being a claim founded on the word of God, and not to be relinquished without a desertion of our station and of our trust.

2. And, therefore, I remarked, as the second particular in the text, the *commission* under which the gospel ministry is instituted.

We have the more occasion to insist on this, because of two opposite errors, of very mischievous tendency.

The first is that which degrades the ministerial office to be the creature of discretion, and altogether subject to its operations. For there are some, who, acknowledging the expediency of an order of men to be set apart for this purpose, yet deny that it is any thing more; which subjects it to human will, as well in the administration of the sacraments as in discipline: and this may not only furnish politicians with pretexts for so controlling the gospel by the force of law, as to make it subservient to wicked purposes; but in a variety of ways, may subject the most important interests of the Church to the caprices and the local prejudices of those who, from time to time, bear a sway in her concerns.

The other error is the setting up of a private call as the ground of ministerial authority. For it being admitted that

this is the way in which the minister derives his commission to occupy himself in ecclesiastical offices; it follows, that the higher power is not to be limited by the lower; and so farewell to all obligation of ecclesiastical determinations, whether for the regulating of public prayer and preaching, or for the governing of private conduct.

In opposition to these two errors, the former of which will always have an alliance with infidelity, and the latter with fanaticism, it is to be held up as a scriptural truth, that the true ground of a right to exercise the ministry is, as our Church article expresses it, "the being called and chosen to the work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard:" this authority, to call and send, knowing of no other source than by derivation from the authority given by our blessed Saviour himself, when he said to his Apostles, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

None will deny that an express commission was given to the Apostles themselves, to "go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;" and if any should pretend, that the commission was restrained to them, and not to be handed in succession, such an opinion does not consist with the promise accompanying the command—"And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!" Which implies, that the commission was not to them only, but also to all who should come after them, in the Ministry.

So it was understood by the Apostles: For except in the case of Matthias, who was divinely designated by lot, and in that of St. Paul, who "neither received the gospel of man, neither was taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ;" all admission to the ministry was by ordination; as in the instance of Timothy, who is said to have been received to it by "the laying on of the Apostle's hands." And then, for indubitable testimony, that the power of ordination

was to go further than the hand which first conveyed it, he tells Timothy, " the things which thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." And in like manner he reminds Titus—" For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee."

In short, it appears that a succession in the ministry was provided by the same high authority which first declared the gospel itself. Whether in that succession there were a disparity, limiting the power of handing it down to an order supereminent to the others, has been a question much agitated; a question which it will be inconsistent with the present limits to discuss; and which, therefore, should not have been mentioned, were it not that the very cases here adduced of Timothy and Titus, are actual instances of there being some of that higher order, in addition to the Apostles themselves. The more the subject is canvassed, the more the fact will be evident, of there never having been a period in the Christian Church without an order of the clergy clothed with certain authorities, including this of ordination, not committed to the other orders.

And now, if this circumstance of regular admission to the ministry were matter of mere form, we might acknowledge that no extreme danger need be apprehended from omitting it, however ancient. But far from this, it will be impossible to detach it from its duties, so as to give up the divine appointment of the former, without subjecting the obligation of the latter to be lessened, or even entirely rejected, as changing interests or inclinations may prompt. When the Apostle charges Timothy, " before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to preach the word," and to do the other duties of his calling; when, in another place he tells him—" O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust;" and when he says of himself, " a dispensation is committed

unto me ; and woe be unto me if I preach not the gospel ;” is it not evident that these, and all such weighty injunctions, presume other ground than the ministry’s resting on mere opinion of usefulness or of expediency ; or than its being an occupation to be engaged in, or abandoned, as private motives may prompt ? Yes ; they are connected with the belief of there being a divine commission, given in the infancy of the Church, and to be coeval with it ; designating a certain order of men who are empowered and enjoined to publish the gospel of truth ; to declare and defend its evidences ; to open and explain its doctrines ; to press, by argument and by persuasion, its precepts ; to administer its ordinances ; and to give assurances of its consolations. All this is scripture truth. If it have been mixed with error, it becomes us to separate the chaff from the wheat, and not to confound and reject the whole. If some, prompted by selfish passions, have “ preached themselves, and not Christ Jesus the Lord ;” if others, by personal insolence, have “ lorded it over God’s heritage ;” and if an enormous power, designated in scripture, has seated itself in the temple of God, with the boast of being clothed with his attributes, the way to counteract these evils is not to give up the ministry’s divine origin. On the contrary, they are thus the more confirmed ; because the advocates of them will always appeal to the authorities which they have perverted and misapplied. No ; let the truth be declared, as deducible from scripture ; and this can never, by fair interpretation, or by consequences naturally arising from it, justify any thing unworthy of that gospel, the professed object of which is to promote “ peace and good will among men.”

After all ; whatever there subsists of divine sanction in the ministerial character and commission, it is with a view to and for the enforcing of the message to which they are attached.

3. And to state to you the leading properties of this *message*, was to be the third head of this discourse.

Here, before we enter into the message itself, let us take notice of the gracious and winning manner in which it is to be tendered. Gospel ministers are to “beseech in God’s name,” and to “pray in Christ’s stead.” God, who has the supreme right to command, draws his creatures with the cords of love. Christ, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, yet condescended, in the days of his flesh, to invite and to entreat. Well, therefore, may their ministers appear for them in the least assuming guise, and make their appeal to the affections. For the treasure is to pass through earthen vessels, and will always be in danger of being tinctured by its defilements. The message is to be delivered by men, and may, therefore, be hindered by their frailties: and it is even well if it meet with no impediment from their passions. Hence they have, in regard to some duties of their ministry, a call to the strictest vigilance, lest they discharge them in such a manner as to show that “they know not what manner of spirit they are of.” But not so in the leading duty of all, the laying open of the offers of redeeming love; the laying of them open in such a manner as is inconsistent with any other object than the salvation of the persons addressed; and, accordingly, by the pressing of their duty principally by such motives as are a call on their gratitude and their honour.

It is true, there are other considerations which the Christian minister is to bring before his hearers: for the laws of God have the sanction of punishments as well as of rewards; and the scriptures threaten “tribulation and anguish to every soul of man that doeth evil.” Yes; this is the way in which they denounce vice; but it is not the way in which they invite to virtue, to that holy and sublime virtue which is the essence of the Christian system. To this, the uniform mean

in scripture is persuasion; and, accordingly, the very message put into the mouths of the ministers of the gospel, in the very place too where it was intended to delineate the most descriptive trait of their office, is, “ as though God did *beseech* you by us; and we *pray* you in Christ’s stead.”

If from this we go on to the consideration of the message itself, the first particular occurring is, that reconciliation supposes preceding enmity. And here it may seem absurd, that an individual of the whole race of mankind, much less that all of them, in their natural state, should be represented as bearing an hatred to God; to that good Being “ who holdeth our feet in life;” who “ giveth us all things to enjoy;” at whose word arose the whole beautiful frame of the universe, by whose providence it is preserved, and by whose presence it is blest. My brethren, this is not the meaning; as if the being, or the perfections, or the works of God, were objects of disapprobation or disesteem with many: but the tone of the sentiment consists in an alienation from his image, and a repugnancy to his laws. He is essentially holy; and, therefore, every thing impure is opposed to his perfections. Benevolence is his most distinguished attribute; and, of course, injurious and uncharitable dispositions are a defacing of that likeness, which all moral agents should bear to him, their great original. It is a duty stamped on our condition of creatures, to be grateful for his mercies, and continually to feel and to confess our dependence on his good providence; and, accordingly, our reluctance to all this implies a contrast to his amiable nature. Now, when the scriptures speak of us as being naturally at enmity with God, it is partly on account of the breach of the original condition of our creation; and partly because of that repugnancy to good, and that bias to evil, with which we were born; and which, unless corrected and restrained by divine grace, evidences itself in neglect, discontent, and rebellion towards God; in envy,

hatred and injuries to our fellow creatures; and in sensual depravity and excess. And herein consists the renovating influence of Christianity; that, to destroy the bitter fruit of this deadly tree, it does not prune the branches, but corrects it at the root; that, to recover men from a state of sin, it first destroys that enmity against God, which is its origin and its support.

Hence the reconciliation spoken of in the text; that is, submission, penitence, and the beginning of reformation, on the part of man; and on the part of God, pardon, acceptance, and the covenanted aids of grace; all through the atoning merits of Christ, than whom "there is none other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved." This is the high and leading sense of revelation, on which hang all its truths, its promises, and its obligations. Accordingly, the Apostle, just before the text, had declared, "God was in Christ," that is, manifesting himself by this Son of his love—"reconciling the world unto himself," meaning, by his acceptance of the atonement offered for it. Reconciliation being thus offered by the party where sovereignty had been offended, the Apostle might well make the Gospel message to consist in an invitation to the offender, to be reconciled unto God by a renouncing of the ground of offence, in opposition to his transcendent goodness.

Having availed ourselves of the ground of reconciliation thus given, we become reconciled to the attributes of God; even in the relation in which we stand to them; reconciled to his holiness, to his omniscience, and to his moral government; all which, however amiable in themselves, are contemplated by us in a state of alienation and enmity, as being full of terror and of danger.

We become reconciled also to his laws. These, however, in themselves holy, just and good, are, to the natural man, forbidding and severe. But not so when we have been

“brought near to God by the blood of the cross;” for then his service is perfect freedom; and all that he requires is not more our duty than our happiness.

And we are reconciled to the dispensations of his providence; the severer of which will always be occasions of murmur or of despondency; until, being contemplated as the visitations of a Father, they are taken in connection with their intended use, of bringing us nearer and nearer to himself.

Such is the reconciliation spoken of: and as it implied a retrospect to a past state of enmity, so it also looks forward to a future living in that “peace with God which passeth all understanding.” Instead of a state of rebellion against him, there succeeds another warfare, the weapons of which are “mighty to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin within us.” That mercy which has “relieved us from the curse of the law,” does not dispense with obedience to it in future; but, on the contrary, binds us to it by new obligations and by extraordinary promises.

The gospel message being thus opened, I will take occasion, before I apply it to the present circumstance of our being assembled, to tender it to all who can be supposed the objects of it. You, if there be any present, who have never been within Christ’s visible fold! you too, of whom a stranger may presume that there are some who have been brought within it by the rite of baptism, but have denied its obligation by a life of sin! “to you is the word of this salvation sent.” We contemplate you, for so we are required by the oracles of God, as in a state of alienation from him. Yet we address you, not in the threatnings of Sinai, but in the persuasive voice of gospel love. “We beseech you in God’s behalf, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God.” Be ye reconciled to him, by renouncing whatever is offensive to his holy eye; by giving up your hearts to the inspirations, and your actions to the guid-

ance of his spirit; by making a worthy profession of his name, and by living as the heirs of a better world.

To my Clerical Brethren, now making a part of our assembled General Convention, I will take the opportunity of suggesting the improvement of the doctrine—that the principal property of their office is its being entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation; that is, with the drawing of men to it by persuasion, and the sealing of it to them by the sacraments.

For with us, my Reverend Brethren, as you know, the principal field of labour is not that referred to in the text, in the strict and obvious letter of it—the proclaiming of the good news of grace to persons who, by the condition of their birth, have been “strangers to the covenants of promise, and without God in the world;” but it is partly to cherish the Christian state of persons who have been brought to Christ in baptismal regeneration; and partly to recover to grace those who have fallen from it; being “taken in the snare of the devil, and led captive by him at his will.” These are a work of greater difficulty than the other, as must be perceived on an attention to the common impediment of both, which is the corruption of the human heart, resisting alike an admission of the evidences of the gospel, and a submission to its guidance. The former, however, may find opportunities in moments of cool reflection, or in those of a proper view of the unsatisfying enjoyments of the world, or of sensibility to the despotic tyranny of sin. But to persuade men to walk in that continual fear of God, which alone can secure against the temptations meeting them in all the engagements of life; and this not always in the open danger of avowed hostility, but sometimes in the deceitful guise of pretended friendship; and not this only, but occasionally under the false appearances of duty, by which satan is said to “transform himself into an angel of light;” in

short, to aid our hearers in a warfare, the formidable nature of which is strikingly figured to us by an Apostle, when he describes it as calling for “ the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the sandals of peace, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit ”—This is a work to be aimed at in our discourses from the pulpit, and in such private advice as opportunity may be given for; which can be exceeded in difficulty only by that other branch of our ministry referred to, the calling of sinners back, through the pains of repentance, to the mercies from which they have wandered. For, Brethren, we justly complain of being misunderstood by those who, from the doctrine of our Church of being in grace in baptism, infer that we make light of the repentance due from those hosts of baptized sinners who live continually exposed to the judgments of God; the more so from having been within his holy covenant, and from having rejected the benefits pledged on his part, and the stipulations made on theirs. The scriptures observe a manifest distinction between persons of this description, and those to whom the word of salvation is in the first instance sent. These are, indeed, called to repentance, the essence of which is a change of mind; and this will always imply sorrow for sin; because, “ what man is there who liveth and sinneth not ? ” But when the same scriptures speak of sinning after grace received, they contemplate it as quite another subject. It is then “ the crucifying of the Son of God afresh, and the putting of him to an open shame. ” It is then declared exceedingly difficult to “ renew them again to repentance, ” on account of the impossibility of any new motives to that effect; which I take to be the sense of the impossibility spoken of in the passage here alluded to. And there is then held out to them in awful warning, that “ there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin ; ” meaning no other besides that which they have ceased to look to; and to which they would of course

be more reluctant to return, than to lay hold of some new hope, if any such there were, not subjecting them to shame and self-reproach for past apostacy.

This being their deplorable condition, let us not judge so strictly of the persuasion with which the gospel is armed in the point of view in which it is exhibited in the text; as if there were not that other point of view alluded to by the same Apostle, where he says—"Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." And there is something well deserving our attention in the manner in which these more awful motives are here stated, as to be addressed by us to the conscience. They may be so improperly brought forward, as if the authority on which they rest were principally that of the speaker; and as if his dignity were offended, and his control resisted, by a disregard of the dreadful penalty displayed. But, says the Apostle, we know, and, as is implied, we preach the terrors of the Lord; yet in such a manner as shows that not ourselves in any shape, but our hearers and their best interests are the object. And this is a distinction which is well exemplified to us in a well known exhortation attached to one of the offices of our Church, in which, after the public reader of it has set before delinquents the awful judgments of an offended God, yet this hinders him not from afterwards "bidding them in the name of God, from calling them in Christ's behalf, and from exhorting them as they love their own salvation," to the opposite of what had been so fearfully set before them.

But, Brethren, in respect to this and every other branch of the ministerial duty, there will be no danger of falling short, if our consciences be duly impressed by what the text more directly sets before us, so as that it shall recur frequently and always when duty is at stake—It is the trust, the dependence, the responsibility characteristic of our ministerial calling. In how many ways did our blessed

Saviour vary this very sentiment, in order to present it continually to our recollection? In one place, it is a talent, given to trade with: in another, it is a stewardship, of which an account is to be rendered: and, in another, it is a mission to compel men, doubtless by the suitable means of conviction and persuasion, to come within the Gospel pale. If in our Lord's commission to his Apostles, and in their measures under it, there were any room, as indeed there is not, to balance on the question of a divine designation of the Ministry and a Succession under it, the matter might be determined by what have been here referred to, of preceding declarations; showing it to have been an object in contemplation from the beginning. It is indeed surprising, that any, who acknowledge the reasonableness and the utility of an instituted Ministry, should not perceive at once the propriety of resting it on the ground here taken, rather than on the will of man; whether as the dictate of expediency, agreeably to some, or as of personal persuasion, agreeably to others: the one making all duty dependent on present feeling, and the other moulding the work after the changeable standard of human opinion or caprice. But if the case have been provided for, by an authority infinitely higher, and by a directory far more explicit—what stable ground of obligation is there to the duties of the Christian Ministry, when we are invited to them by an Apostle, where he says—"I charge thee before God and the elect Angels;" by another Apostle, in the address, "the Elders among you I exhort, who am also an Elder;" and by our Lord in person, where he admonishes—"Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning." In these, and in many similar intimations, our duties come to us with an authority, with which no human law can clothe them, and with a certainty which no self-persuasion can ensure.

However, therefore, Brethren, the sentiment may have

been disgraced by some, and however, on this account, it may appear in a suspicious shape to others, let there be no hesitation in any Clergyman to claim to his office the title of heavenly origin, which will the more impress him with the sense of the account he is to render of his stewardship.

If, however, under a charge which should make him little in his own eyes, he should be, as the Apostle says, "vainly puffed up with his fleshly mind;" it is one of the ways in which "that which should be for men's health becomes to them an occasion of falling." And in this event, dreadful will be the issue. For as the Angels who "kept not their estate appointed to them," are "reserved to the judgment of the great day;" so we may well look for the same to those who make a sacred character a covering for passions the most opposed to the graces which it was given to inculcate. Some frailties are so imposing in their nature, that it is difficult to judge how far they may conceal themselves from a mind otherwise assimilated to the spirit of the Gospel. But pride, and especially pride founded on the clerical character, is what seems to imply an entire absence of its holy influence; and the practice of the person tainted with it will be a contradiction of the most important instructions which it will be his duty to deliver.

Be assured, Brethren, that in being far removed from this dark and depraved spirit, you will give one of the best proofs of your being worthy servants of that Master, who was "meek and lowly in heart," and who, though in his pre-existent dignity divine, yet, for the example of all mankind, "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

As well to my Lay Brethren of the Convention as to the Clerical, I will take the opportunity of mentioning, that while I have been engaged in opening the session at their desire.

there has often recurred to me the painful recollection, that I am supplying the place of a deceased brother,* in the discharge of a duty undertaken by him, at our last triennial meeting. If from present health and strength there were any continuance of them to be counted on, little could it at that time have been supposed, by those of us who beheld him entering on the Episcopacy, and who entertained expectations justified by known talents and an established reputation, that he was so soon to be removed from his works to his reward. My first acquaintance with him, except that of correspondence held some short time before, was nearly twenty-three years ago, at the first Convention held for the organizing of our Church. My opinion formed of him on that occasion, and confirmed by whatever I have since known of him, was his possessing of a capacity much above the common standard; and his being furnished, as with all the endowments which could qualify him to serve the Church, so especially with that which the crisis of her situation particularly called for—a determination of mind equally resisting innovation in whatever could be deemed essential to her system; yet conforming to existing circumstances, in matters confessedly subject to discretion. And besides this, there was something in his deportment, in whatever was interesting to the Church, which forbade all apprehension of there being any reference to self. Doubtless, all who knew him counted on his filling of his new station with dignity, and with benefit to the Church. But the ways of God, although unsearchable, must be wise: and while we bow in submission to his sovereign will, I am confident that all my Episcopal brethren will join me in the sentiment, that the greater the loss of the Church in the decease of our respected brother, the more desirable to those who remain will be the prayers of their Clerical and their

* Right Rev. Bishop Parker, of Massachusetts.



